

Mariners Church

U.S. Topographical Engineers Historical Marker

Address: 170 E. Jefferson

Local		
State	v	10/23/57 Mariners Church
State Marker	v	1997
National	v	3/11/71 Mariners Church



Mariners Church



Historic Overview:

In 1842, according to the will of Julia Ann Anderson, Mariners' Church was organized to serve the spiritual needs of Great Lakes seamen. Anderson had come to Detroit in 1818 with her husband, John, a brevet lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Topographical Engineers. Designed by Calvin Otis of Buffalo, New York, the Gothic Revival church was built in 1849 on the northwest corner of Woodward Avenue and Woodbridge Street. In 1955 the church was moved to make room for Civic Center Plaza. Hauled 880 feet along steel rails to this site, the 3,000-ton limestone structure blocked Woodward Avenue for 21 days. The church was immortalized in the 1975 ballad "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" as the "cathedral" where "the church bell chimed 'til it rang 29 times." Mariners' Church is in the National Register of Historic Places.

U.S. Topographical Engineers When Michigan became a state in 1837, the Detroit office of the U.S. Topographical Engineers was headquartered on this site. The topographical engineers helped transform Michigan from a wilderness to a prosperous state. They also played a vital role in Great Lakes navigation before the Civil War. First appointed in 1813, the engineers surveyed land, canals, railroads, and harbors, and platted military positions relative to roads, villages, rivers and ravines. They also constructed lighthouses. During the 1820s and 1830s engineers from the Detroit office built roads to Toledo, Saginaw, and Chicago, thus opening Michigan's interior to new settlement. As a result, Michigan's population increased from 8,000 in 1820 to 200,000 in 1840.

Text as written on Michigan Historical Marker

